IMT Nuremberg Archives

H – 967

International Court of Justice

Com. B.
20 June 1946
Winkler
Take 3--8
Straub

H0967 - 0002

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFENSE OF ORGANIZATIONS, TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED 13 MARCH 1946.

21 June 1946

COMMISSIONER:

M. Martin Havard

THE GESTAPO

(The Commission reconvened at 1405 hours)

FRANZ STRAUB, a witness, took the stand and testified as follows:

COMMISSIONER: We will swear the witness in.

DR. MERKEL (Defense Counsel for the Gestapo) The oath has been taken already.

COMMISSIONER: Then the witness is reminded that he is still under oath.

THE WITNESS: Yes.

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY DR. MERKEL:

Q. I shall continue with the explanation of the witness. If I understood you correctly, your testimony and the testimony of the witness, Knochen, then it was your intention to say the following. After the occupation of Belgium and Northern France, Thomas was appointed as head of the Sipo and SD?

A. Yes.

Q. Was he relieved of his office around the end of 1941?

A. Yes.

Q. Was there an office created to serve the higher office of the SS and

H0967 - 0003

was there created the office of the Chief Commander of the SD?

A. Yes.

Q. How did things develop after Thomas was recalled in Belgium and Northern France?

A. The man in charge of the office at Brussels became deputy chief of the Sipo and SD, with the military government there in Belgium and Northern France.

Q. To whom was this man subordinate?

A. He was subordinate both to the chief of the Sipo, the Security Police and to the head of the military operations in Belgium.

Q. In what respects was he subordinate to the chief of military operations in Belgium, and in what respect was he subordinate to the chief of the Security Police in Belgium?

A. As faras questions of personnel were concerned, he was subordinate to the chief of the Security Police. As far as the actual work was concerned, he was subordinate to the chief of military operations.

Q. Was it, therefore, that only from the chief of military operations actual orders so far as the work was concerned could be issued?

A. I assume that any orders issued by the chief of the Security Police, Sipo, and SD which were issued had to be discussed with the military operations.

Q. Did there exist in Belgium and Northern France independent police forces belonging to those countries?

A. There existed in Belgium an independent government which had its own police force.

Q. And how were things in Northern France?

A. The situation was just the same in Norther France.

Q. Did you cooperate with those independent police forces in those countries, and if so, how?

2

Com. B.
Winkler
Take 3 - 10
20 June 1946
Straub
1400 - 1530 hours

H0967 - 0004

A. We did cooperate with the independent police force in Belgium, and we did so in the following manner. Just like the Security Police, the Belgium police received their ~~st~~ orders from that department of military government which dealt with police matters. The Belgium police maintained a liaison man who were in contact both with the police department of the military government and with security police.

Q. When and why did the Security Police in Belgium receive executive powers?

A. Initially the Security Police didn't have any executive powers. The executive powers initially received - exclusive with the GSV, which stands for Secret Field Police - only after it had developed that that Secret Field Police in consideration with its own tasks was not able any longer to perform executive funcitons, they were transferred in individual cases to the Security Police. When the supreme SS and Political Leaders were appointed and to them were transferred the functions of the Secret Field Police, then the Security Police had been given executive powers. I may say that practically that transfer of functions never became full fact, because soon after the appointment of the supreme SS and Political Leaders, the invasion took place, and the executive functions were transferred back to the Secret Field Police.

Q. Did certain fields of competence remain with the chief of military operations even after the police functions had been transferred to the Security Police?

A. Yes, particularly the defense against espionage, the defense within the troops remained with the Chief of military operations. Since shortly thereafter the invasion succeeded, and Belgium again began a battle ground, those intelligence and counter-intelligence functions became again a function of the fighting troops, and not of the military government in Belgium.

Com. B.
Winkler
Take 3 - 11
20 June 1946
Straub
1400 - 1530 hours

H0967-0005

Q. What armament did the Security Police in Belgium, and of course in France, carry?

A. The Security Police carried pistols and carbines and only until in 1942 and 1943, they were equipped with machine pistols which could be thrown down from the air.

Q. What do you mean by thrown down from the air?

A. They were dropped by English pilots for the resistence movement in Belgium.

Q. Where were the people taken arrested by the Security police in Belgium and Northern France?

A. Those people were at first taken to military prison and then taken before the military courts martials. In addition to the military prison, because there wasn't enough space in them, there was also used the camp at Breendonk.

Q. Who was in charge of administration and guarding of the military prisons?

A. A special department of the Commando Staff of the military government.

Q. On Page 3349 of the German text of the proceedings, there is a description given of the Camp at Breendonk which you mentioned. Have you a personal knowledge of that camp?

A. Yes.

Q. Why and for what purpose had that camp been established?

A. There was a lack of military prisons in that district.

Q. Who created that military prison?

A. The military government requested the competent office of the Security Police to find appropriate location for such a prison camp and in the course of those proceedings Breendonk was selected and one reason was because the King of Belgium and his staff had stayed there until

H0967-0006

the end of military operations in 1940.

Q. Document #276, RF 329, states on page #4: "The administration of the Camp at Breendonk was in the hands of the Gestapo." Is that correct?

A. The Gestapo had nothing to do whatsoever with the conduct and supervision of the camp at Breendonk.

Q. Who was in charge of the surveys of the prisoners and guarding of the camp?

A. A military unit was used for the guarding of the camp. Director of the camp was appointed who had a small staff of his own, and this group was in charge of the supervision of the prisoners.

Q. Did Department #4 of the SD - that would be the State Police - did they have anything to do with the administration, and supervision of the camp?

A. No, they didn't have anything to do anything at all.

Q. Was the camp used for longer periods of arrests or only for brief periods?

A. It was used only for temporary safekeeping. There were sent to that camp people who had committed crimes andother actions against the occupied power and other people who were sent there for short so-called protective custody.

Q. Could you tell us some details about those so-called protective custody orders?

A. That security custody proceeding was used to prevent the use of protective custody procedure.

Q. Document UK 76, on Page 3 claims that after the outbreak of the German-Russian War, many communists were in prison there. Is that correct?

A. Communists were not sent there for being communists, but they were sent there because they had got bands together who committed crimes of violence against the German occupied force as well as against Belgium. I may say that until

H0967-0007

the outbreak of Russian-German War we maintained, so to say, with the communists and their leaders in Belgium, because, making reference to the Russian-German treaty, they collaborated with us and gave us information on existing communist organizations.

Q. Were Jews kept in the camp at Breendonk?

A. Jews as far as they had contact or belonged to the above mentioned categories - guilty of crimes were kept at Breendonk and until the time when special Jewish camp in Mecheln was established, Jews were also kept in Breendonk as a concentration point to prepare for emigration.

Q. Document UK 76, claims on page 3, that more strict and more severe regulations governed the Jews. Is that correct?

A. I stressed already that I had nothing to do with the administration of the camp but I can't imagine why special rules should have been in force regarding the Jews. Particularly as far as those Jews were concerned who were gathered there in preparation of their emigration. There certainly didn't exist any reason why they should have been treated more severely than the other prisoners.

Q. Where were the people arrested taken from the camp at Breendonk?

A. Those people who had to come before the military court were taken there. The other people who were there only in Security custody were kept there until the military government informed us that the Security custody was terminated.

Q. What was the capacity of that camp?

A. I guess that there were never more and probably less than 500 people there.

Q. Was there compulsory labor for the prisoners at that camp?

A. For those people who were fit to work, labor in the camp was compulsory.

H0967-0008

For those who were not fit or only partially fit, such consideration was granted.

Q. Do you know whether the chief of the Sipo was informed of cases of mistreatment and whether he took any steps against their recurrence?

A. I recall that in the early periods of the existence of the camp - I think in the Winter of 1941 - complaints reached the chief of the military government, and he appointed a commission to investigate the conditions there.

Q. Was that camp at any time ordered to initiate mass campaigns of mistreatment? Were such orders at any time issued by the head office of the Security Police?

A. It is true that the head office of the Security Police knew of the existence of that camp, but I cannot imagine that at any time it took any measures to interfer with the conduct of the camp or its administration. I never heard of it and I can't imagine that it happened.

Q. Were any executions performed within the territory of the camp?

A. Yes.

Q. Who ordered and who carried out those executions?

A. Sentences of military courts were carried out by military units upon orders of the military chief. I must add that there was a special military unit/was there to carry out executions and I know that the executions what they performed were/not ordered by the military courts, but were ordered by the Fuehrer or OKW or any other authority I don't know.

Q. Did the Security Police have any part in those executions?

A. No.

Q. The mentioned document UK 76 claims on page 2 that about 250 prisoners of that camp perished due to lack of food or as result of mistreatment, 450 are reported to have been shot and 12 hanged. Is that correct?

H0967-0009

A. I do not know how many executions were carried out there, and I don't know of any cases that people died as a result of mistreatment. I do know that certain diseases ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ broke out there and that certain people died of those disease and I must add that as a result of the outbreak of such diseases, the military commando appointed a military physician to be in charge of the camp.

Q. Were any collective fines imposed upon the prisoners of the camp?

A. The only man who could have issued such orders ~~xxxxx~~ would have been the director of the camps. Whether he had the authority to impose such collective fines as result of camp regulations issued by the military authorities, I don't know anything about it.

Q. Page 6 of Document UK 76, claims that there existed an order compelling the prisoners to crawl below the bed and it is claimed that Lt. Braus stepped and trambled on the prisoners during the procedure?

A. I know nothing about those claims. I never heard of them.

Lt. Comdr. Harris: I suggest that the witness has disqualified himself to testify concerning atrocities which may or may not have occurred within the camp. He says he doesn't know anything about it, and I don't think we are accomplishing anything by asking the questions.

Dr. Merkel: I would like to state that this question was the first to which the witness was not able to answer. He is well acquainted with the conditions which existed in Breendonk, because he had been there. I, therefore, consider him qualified to answer those questions on which he knows and which he can answer.

Commissioner: All right - proceed.

Q. Is is true that hoods were drawn over the heads of prisoners when they left their cells?

A. Again I can't say yes or no. I can only venture a guess as to an answer.

H0967 - 0010

MR. MONNERAY: I think this time really it is only a question of a possibility of his knowing. I think you should go on and not stay on this point.

Q. At least I would like to ask the witness then - do you know that certain members of certain resistence movements actually had drawn such hoods over their faces and for the reasons that other prisoners should not be able to recognize them?

A. There was some talk to that effect, and I had mentioned before that there existed a special unit of a special court there at Breendonk which had their own prisoners there. Due to the particularly secret character of that crime, it was considered necessary to conceal the identity of those prisoners so that no other person in the camp could recognize them, so it is quite possible that those prisoners were made to wear such special hoods whenever they left cells or corssed passage ways in the camp. I' haven't seen it because during the period of time I didn't come to that camp.

Q. The document UK 76 claims on page 15 that Breendonk had been worse than concentration camps in Germany?

A. I didn't see any German concentration camps, but due to the strict control and supervision executed by the military commander I can imagine that condition at the camp were worse than those regulated by the camp directive, and if there are single cases in which those regulations were observed than the camp director would have to take the blame for such conditions.

Q. The same document on page 8 claims that it repeatedly occurred that prisoners were thrown into a ditch surrounding the camp and that many of them drowned there. Do you know of such incidents?

A. I haven't heard of such incidents, but I believe if that occurred that would have reached the military commander.

Com. B.
Winkler
Take 3 - 17
20 June 1946
Straub
1400 - 1530 hours

H0967 - 0011

MR. MONNERAY: I think it has been shown it is sufficient that the witness here only from time to time and not very often went in this camp, so I think it is not necessary any more to put questions to him about permanent conditions inside this camp.

COMMISSIONER: The Commission rules that in future cases the witness should simply state whether he has knowledge or not of certain conditions, but it should not be expected that he should give personal opinions on any of those matters. If, however, witness should actually be informed about existing conditions, then he may explain in the relevancy, but no case should he be permitted to pass personal judgments.

Com. B
Take 4 - P 1
Noll
20 June 1946
Straub

H0967 - 0012

1530 hours

Q. Document UK 76, page 12, states that all prisoners, with very few exceptions, who were interrogated in Breendonk were mistreated and beaten. Is that correct?

A. I know nothing about it, nor have there been any complaints.

Q. The same page mentions a torture chamber in Breendonk. Was there such a thing?

A. I only know of two interrogation rooms, which were furnished, exactly like any other civil service offices, with a desk and a couple of chairs.

Q. Page 12 of the same document states that interrogations were undertaken usually by Gestapo officials from Brussels and Antwerp. If they had no authority to torture someone, they telegraphed the Gestapo office in Brussels which had the records of the prisoners, in order to ask whether they were permitted to torture. In Brussels, Standartenfuehrer Dr. Canaris usually answered in the affirmative. Later, Obersturmbannfuehrer Ehlers. At the last, it was Canaris again. Will you please elucidate?

A. The prisoners who were transferred to Breendonk were transferred by the entire security police from the entire area of the kommando from Belgium and France only if the existing wehrmacht prisons no longer had room. Besides the security police, the secret field police also, and the field gendarmerie, also transferred prisoners there for the same reasons. I also will mention here that special units by the name of "rote kapelle" delivered their prisoners there. The people who were interrogated could not all belong, without any further comment, to the security police in Brussels. But as far as they did belong to the secret police or any other authorities subordinate to them, the chief of the office in Brussels would have been the proper authority to grant third degree methods. The conducting expert had to ask permission in writing for any third degree interrogations, basing his request on certain reasons

H0967 - 0013

for it. There is no question of any torture, but the only way permission could have been asked for would have been by letter. Any other means of communication is not known to me. If this permission had been requested by telephone, this telephone would have been a public telephone--which, of course, would have been Belgian property. I cannot assume that any permission such as a third degree interrogation could have been asked for in the way stated.

Q. Were there Belgian or French SIPO or SD prisons? Did the SD or SIPO have authority to institute proceedings again foreign nationals in Belgium or in Northern France, or to execute them by shooting?

A. No. I have mentioned that all people arrested by SIPO or secret police or field gendarmerie had to be transferred to military posts.

Q. Did the security police order the shooting of hostages in Belgium or in Northern France? Were there concentration camps in Belgium or in Northern France?

A. There were no concentration camps in Belgium or in Northern France on the model of German concentration camps, which executed protective custody.

Q. Who was commandant for the evacuation of Jews from Belgium and the North of France?

A. In order to answer this question properly, I must discuss the organization of the deputy of the chief of the security police. Department One was in charge of administration and personnel; Department Two, enemies of the ideology; Department Three, living areas; Department Four, Gestapo; Department Five, criminal police; Department Six, foreign intelligence service. Section One employed administrative officials; Section Two employed SA fuehrers and perhaps some criminal police; Section Three, again SA fuehrers; Section Four, Gestapo officials and employees; Section Five, again detectives (criminal police); Section Six, SD employees. Collection and deportation of individuals was taken

H0967 - 0014

care of by Department No. 2. In May 1943, Section Two was dissolved, and matters pertaining to Jews, Freemasons, and churches were transferred to Section Four--which was the Gestapo.

Q. When was Section Eichmann put in charge of these matters?

A. Section Eichmann was in charge of this in an executive capacity at the Reichssicherheitshauptamt.

Q. What were the functions of the Jewish Committee in Brussels?

A. The Jewish Committee in Brussels was active in the care of Jews. This Jewish council took an active part in taking care of personal matters of these people and also taking care of the clothing and food supplies during their transportation.

Q. Who supervised the shelter, treatment, and food supply ?

A. I am convinced that this came under the military administration. Internal administration and supervision was executed by Section Two, which I mentioned before. On approximately the first of May, 1943, these functions were transferred to Section Four.

Q. Who actually transferred the Jews to Mecheln?

A. Section Two, which I have just mentioned.

Q. What was the purpose of the evacuation of these Jews?

A. Toward the end of the year 1940 or the beginning of 1941, Jews were asked to report at a certain place. The only thing known in the subsequent time was that these people were to be used to labor in the reconstruction of the East. We believed that our conviction was confirmed by letters which we had received from the military authorities or the Jewish council. These letters came from the East and also from Theresienstadt, and they asked the addresses to take care of belongings which they had stored.

Q. In connection with the Jewish problem, did anyone in your circle discuss the final solution of it, and what was understood by it?

H0967-0015

A. Regarding the solution of the Jewish problem in general, or regarding the Jewish problem in Belgium?

Q. The problem in general.

A. I have never heard anything about the final solution in general.

Q. Did the security police in Belgium confiscate the fortunes of the Jews?

A. I can answer this question only beginning with the period starting 1 May 1943. I do know that then the Jews' fortunes were not confiscated by the security police. The confiscation of the Jewish fortunes--or, as they were called, "enemy fortunes"--was with Group Twelve of the military administration.

Q. Do you know anything about how the transports were equipped and who furnished the accompanying personnel?

A. I xxx never saw such a transport personally, but the lagerfuehrer informed me that, at least after May 1, 1943, these transports were equipped very well. He told me that the Jewish Committee, particularly, played a big role in this. Food, blankets, water, and medical supplies were furnished for a longer period than was required xx for the actual travel time. Up to May, 1943, it was done by Section Two. After May, 1943, a group composed of volksdeutsch who originated in the Banat and Rumania took this xxxxxxxxx transport from Mecheln to the frontier. However, it was not always thus. That only happened occasionally. Usually these transports were taken over by the ordnungspolizei and were accompanied from Mecheln to their final xx destination.

Q. Is it correct that, contrary to the orders issued by Eichmann, the Jewish Committee was authorized to open homes for children and sick people?

A. Yes.

Q. Is it correct that, contrary to the orders of Himmler, six to eight hundred Jews were left in Mecheln when the troops decamped?

H0967 - 0016

A. The lagerfuehrer telephoned me, since he could not get hold of another official, to ask me for the preparation of railroad cars for the transportation of the people as ordered by Himmler in his area of authority. I advised him, since I did not have any authority to issue orders, to leave these Jews in the camp. I asked him to turn them over, including their property and their available rations, to the Jewish indigent personnel. He himself was to withdraw when the kommando commandant of Mecheln himself withdrew. I had no opportunity to check on this in person, but later on I met some of our people in Hasselt and asked them whether the lagerfuehrer acted according to my advice. That was confirmed.

Q. Is it correct that the German police generally were designated as Gestapo or SD within the area of authority without the public's being informed about the details or the tasks of every individual factor of the organization?

A. In Belgium, as everywhere else, the Gestapo was held responsible for everything that happened. Neither the public nor the authorities had any concept of the detailed tasks which had been assigned to each one. In addition to that, some gangs used this designation in order to be able to commit arrests, mistreatments, or any other punishable actions.

Q. What do you know about the activity of the SS or the police courts?

A. It is very well known everywhere that sentences were executed more severely in the SS and police courts than in the general courts.

Q./ Were Gestapo employees guilty of some punishable offense also sentenced in these courts?

A. Yes. It was generally known that sentences against members of the security police or the SD were very severe. Himmler had ordered the printing of the procedure before these courts in pamphlet form. These pamphlets were distributed to all offices, where they were read during the training and educational courses of the civil service employees in order to be effective

15

H0967 - 0017

as a medium of teaching and also as a horrible example. Also, it was known--and the civil service employees were informed of it--that in occupied xxxx territory they had to keep their hands clean in every direction, because, after a possibly victorious war, the police would still have to take care of cases which up to the date of victory might not have been cleared up.

Q. Previously you mentioned"verscharfte vernehmung." Were such "verscharfte vernehmung" being practiced within your area of authority?

A. Such "third degree" interrogations took place. As I previously stated, they had to be authorized by the chief, who either authorized them or rejected them.

Q. How many such "third degrees" took place between 1940 and 1944?

A. We must again refer to the organizations. The chief of the office in Brussels authorized those applications which were submitted by the office in Brussels. Whether the chiefs of the outlying offices or, later, their successors, the kommandos of the security police, were in a position to authorize such action, I do not know.

Q. Will you answer my question. How large was the number of such interrogations in xxxxx Brussels?

A. It is my opinion that there were no more than fifty during the entire time in Belgium. One must consider that not every third degree, though xxxxxx authorized, may have taken place actually. I wish to repeat that a transgression of the directive was not permitted.

Q. What, exactly, were these "third degree" interrogations?

A. The only thing I can remember from the directive was the withdrawal of one meal, manacles, and--at the worst--beating with a stick. A definite number of strokes with a stick without an attending physician; if the number of strokes exceeded ten, the attendance of a physician was prescribed. Then, too, a

H0967-0018

limit was set. I cannot recall it; fifteen or twenty-five strokes.

Q. Were there any instruments of torture kept in the office of the chief of the security police in Brussels or any of the outlying offices, or anywhere within the sphere of your authority?

A. Officially, there were no torture instruments. They were prohibited, and, consequently, they could not have been acquired.

Q. Were the torture cellars, which are repeatedly cited by the Prosecution, in existence?

A. The security police had no torture cellars. The offices of the security police had arrest cells where the prisoners were to be kept during the period before they were sent to military prisons. There was a strict order which required that prisoners, because of the meals, were not to be picked up in the morning before eight o'clock and were to be brought back before eleven o'clock, were not to be picked up before two o'clock, and had to be returned by six o'clock. In Brussels it was as follows: If one wished to interrogate a prisoner outside office hours, one had to make an application to the commander of the jail.

Q. Would it have been possible to hide the tortures which are said to have occurred daily?

A. The security police had their offices in what were originally apartment buildings, and they were not constructed to hide anything without its becoming known. The general public, for reasons of its own, perhaps for intervention or to have a question answered, posted themselves in the hallways of these buildings.

Q. When Belgian nationals were arrested, did persons connected with Belgian society try to intervene for such people?

A. It was customary in Luxembourg, and I do not believe it different in France, that the public, for the slightest reason, turned to the military commander or to the military government or to the different sectors of the police. People inter-

H0967-0019

vened either by telephone, in person, or by letter--/by telephone or in person frequently even before the person who had been arrested had xxi arrived at the headquarters of the organization which had made the arrest. Every arrest, by order of the military commander of the military government, had to be made in sevenfold copies, of which five copies xx went to each police sector. Among these five sectors, the Belgian police was included.

Q. The German document, page3304, Document F 560, RF 305; "One must conclude from checking these testimonies that the barbarism which was applied x during these interrogations were always the same in the several localities mentioned." Will you please elucidate?

A. Nothing except "verscharfte vernehmung" was permitted within the frame-work of police activity, referring to the directive mentioned. In my opinion, such mistreatment and torture of the arrestees can never have taken place.

Q. The same page declares the following: "A man who made an attempt to escape and was captured was put back into his cell, turned over to police dogs, and eaten alive."

A. I have heard nothing regarding this case, and no doubt that would have been made public. x Aside from/xxx fact, xxxx I do not know of a single case where police dogs were used. There weren't any.

Q. /Page 3306 of the German record, a x Gestapo headquarters in Armentieres is mentioned. Was there a Gestapo office in Armentieres?

A. I only recall that there was one office in Northern France, and that was in Lille.

Q. Page 3308 mentions a torture cellar in xxx Valenciennes. Was there such a torture chamber?

A. According to my knowledge, Valenciennes xxx also, being in Northern France, had no security police office.

H0967-0020

Com. B
Take 4 - P 9
Noll
June 20, 1946
Straub

Q. I am submitting to you the document F 560 RF 305. I should like to read a few excerpts from that document: Page 15 of this document mentions a man by the name of Stanis as a member of the Gestapo. Is that correct?

A. Neither the Gestapo nor the security police had a member by the name of Stanis.

Q. Page 16 mentions a Gestapo office in Arras, and also mentions a certain man by the name of Habener in Loos.

A. As far as I know, Loos was a military prison near Lille. There was a men who belonged to the office of Lille by the name of Habener.

Q. Page 19 mentions mistreatment by the security police in Lille. The page mentions the feldpolizei.

A. The feldpolizei had nothing to do with the security police. I have nothing to say in regard to that. As far as I can remember, the security police and the commander of the security police was extant in that part of Lille called La Madelaine. If the statement of the interrogee is correct, the official has committed an infraction of the rules. Hitting him or stepping on him were not permitted to the interrogator in accordance with the directive, even when it was a "verscharfte vernehmung."

Q. I am submitting to you F 571, RF 307. Page 21 of this document mentions offices of the Gestapo in Courdray and Tourquois. Were there any offices of the security police here?

A. There was no office of the security police in Tourquois. There was none in Courdray either.

Q. Page 27 mentions an office of the Gestapo in Boulogne sur mer.

A. There was none there. I stated before, as far as I know there was only an office in Lille.

19

H0967-0021

Q. Page 30 speaks of police in civilian clothing. Is this a sign that it was security police?

A. That is no proof at all, because the secret field police, as well as the counter-intelligence and specially-charged troops, also appeared in civilian clothes as well as uniform. Also, illegal troops calling themselves Gestapo appeared both in uniform and in civilian clothes. The military commander in Belgium and Northern France had, by means of the press, repeatedly pointed out such counterfeit police; he published the identification cards of all the police sections including the identification cards of the Belgian police. He asked the population to immediately call up any military office if anyone should come to them claiming to be police and having no identification card.

Q. Referring to Chapter Two of the document designated as UK 76, RS 329, Page 80 reads as follows: "We can actually say that no one arrested by the Gestapo has escaped mistreatment."

A. I was in Belgium for four years. No one ever made any statement at any time that anywhere did he suffer such treatment at the hands of the police. Whenever any disagreement arose, the military commander, as well as the chief of the pertinent office of the SD security police, stepped in. I, myself, took steps because it was not in the mental makeup of the professional policeman to act in such a manner. If it is stated here that practically no one, or no one at all, escaped beatings, there are as many witnesses as there are adults in Belgium.

Q. The last question referring to the subject: Were there any "verscharfte vernehmung" practiced against women?

A. No; such interrogations were never permitted in the case of women. As far as I can remember the directive verbatim, it does not mention specifically

HO967 - 0022

that subject; but it was considered generally a law in the security police that women were not to undergo third degree interrogations, and that they were not to use manacles on them.

(The Commission adjourned at 1700 hours.)

The foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of FRANZ STRAUB, taken on 20 June 1946.

Bernice Swanson
Reporter (pp

D. J. Noll
Reporter (pp

CERTIFIED TO :

M. Martin Howard
Commissioner

Mohr

H0967-0023

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFENSE OF ORGANIZATIONS, TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED 13 MARCH 1946.

20 June 1946

COMMISSIONER:

H. Martin Havard

THE GESTAPO

(The Commission reconvened at 1400 hours.)

FRANZ STRAUB, a witness, took the stand and testified as follows:

COMMISSIONER: We will swear the witness in.

DR. MERKEL (Defense Counsel for the Gestapo) The oath has been taken already.

COMMISSIONER: Then the witness is reminded that he is still under oath.

THE WITNESS: Yes.

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY DR. MERKEL:

Q I shall continue with the explanation of the witness. If I understood you correctly, your testimony and the testimony of the witness, Knochen, then it was your intention to say the following. After the occupation of Belgium and Northern France, Thomas was appointed as head of the Sipo and SD?

A Yes.

Q Was he relieved of his office around the end of 1941?

A Yes.

Q Was there an office created to serve the higher office of the SS and was there created the office of the Chief Commander of the SD?

A Yes.

Q How did things develop after Thomas was recalled in Belgium and Northern France?

A The man in charge of the office at Brussels became deputy chief of the Sipo and SD, with the military government there in Belgium and Northern France.

Q To whom was this man subordinate?

H0967-0024

A He was subordinate both to the chief of the Sipo, the Security Police and to the head of the military operations in Belgium.

Q In what respects was he subordinate to the chief of military operations in Belgium, and in what respect was he subordinate to the chief of the Security Police in Belgium?

A As far as questions of personnel were concerned, he was subordinate to the chief of the Security Police. As far as the actual work was concerned, he was subordinate to the chief of military operations.

Q Was it, therefore, that only from the chief of military operations actual orders so far as the work was concerned could be issued?

A I assume that any orders issued by the chief of the Security Police, Sipo, and SD which were issued had to be discussed with the military operations.

Q Did there exist in Belgium and Northern France independent police forces belonging to those countries?

A There existed in Belgium an independent government which had its own police force.

Q And how were things in Northern France?

A The situation was just the same in Northern France.

Q Did you cooperate with those independent police forces in those countries, and if so, how?

A We did cooperate with the independent police force in Belgium, and we did so in the following manner. Just like the Security Police, the Belgium police received their orders from that department of military government which dealt with police matters. The Belgian police maintained a liaison man who was in contact both with the police department of the military government and with security police.

Q When and why did the Security Police in Belgium receive executive powers?

H0967-0025

A Initially the Security Police didn't have any executive powers. The executive powers initially received 5 exclusive with the GSV, which stands for Secret Field Police - only after it had developed that that Secret Field Police in consideration with its own tasks was not able any longer to perform executive functions, they were /transferred in individual cases to the Security Police. When the supreme SS and Political Leaders were appointed and to them were transferred the functions of the Secret Field Police, then the Security Police had been given executive powers. I may say that practically that transfer of functions never became full fact, because soon after the appointment of the supreme SS and Political Leaders, the invasion took place, and the executive functions were transferred back to the Secret Field Police.

Q Did certain fields of competence remain with the chief of military operations even after the police functions had been transferred to the Security Police?

A Yes, particularly the defense against espionage, the defense within the troops remained with the Chief of military operations. Since shortly thereafter the invasion succeeded, and Belgium again began a battle ground, those intelligence and counter-intelligence functions became again a function of the fighting troops, and not of the military government in Belgium.

H0967-0026

Q What armament did the Security Police in Belgium, and of course in France, carry?

A The Security Police carried pistols and carbines and only until in 1942 and 1943, they were equipped with machine pistols which could be thrown down from the air.

Q What do you mean by thrown down from the air?

A They were dropped by English pilots for the resistance movement in Belgium.

Q Where were the people taken arrested by the Security Police in Belgium and Northern France?

A Those people were at first taken to military prison and then taken before the military courts martials. In addition to the military prison, because there wasn't enough space in them, there was also used the camp at Breendonk.

Q Who was in charge of administration and guarding of the military prisons?

A A special department of the Commando Staff of the military government.

Q On Page 3349 of the German text of the proceedings, there is a description given of the Camp at Breendonk which you mentioned. Have you a personal knowledge of that camp?

A Yes.

Q Why and for what purpose had that camp been established?

A There was a lack of military prisons in that district.

Q Who created that military prison?

A The military government requested the competent office of the Security Police to find appropriate location for such a prison camp and in the course of those proceedings Breendonk was selected and one reason was because the King of Belgium and his Staff had stayed there until the end of military operations in 1940.

Q Document #276, RF 329, states on page #4: "The administration of the Camp at Breendonk was in the hands of the Gestapo." Is that correct?

A The Gestapo had nothing to do whatsoever with the conduct and supervision of the camp at Breendonk.

H0967-0027

Q Who was in charge of the surveys of the prisoners and guarding of the camp?

A A military unit was used for the guarding of the camp. Director of the camp was appointed who had a smallstaff of his own, and this group was in charge of the supervision of the prisoners.

Q Did Department #4 of the SD -- that would be the State Police -- did they have anything to do with the administration, and supervision of the camp?

A No, they didn't have to do anything at all.

Q Was the camp used for longer periods of arrests or only for brief periods?

A It was used only for temporary safekeeping. There were sent to that camp people who had committed crimes and other actions against the occupied power and other people who were sent there for short so-called protective custody.

Q Could you tell us some details about those so-called protective custody orders?

A That security custody proceeding was used to prevent the use of protectiv custody procedure.

Q Document UK 76, on Page 3 claims that after the outbreak of the German-Russian War, many communists were in prison there. Is that correct?

A Communists were not sent there for being communists, but they were sent there because they had got bands together who committed crimes of violence against the German occupied force a s well as against Belgium. I may say that until the outbreak of Russian-German War we maintained, so to speak, with the communists and their leaders in Belgium, because, making reference to the Russian-German treaty, they collaborated with us and gave us information on existing communist organizations.

Q Were Jews kept in the camp at Breendonk?

A Jews as far as they had contact or belonged to the above mentioned categories -- guilty of crimes were kept at Breendonk and until the time when special Jewish cap in Mecheln was established, Jews were also kept in Breendonk as a concentration point to prepare foremigration.

H0967 - 0028

Q Document UK 76, claims on page 3, that more strict and more severe regulations governed the Jews. Is that correct?

A I stressed already that I had nothing to do with the administration of the camp but I can't imagine why special rules should have been in force regarding the Jews. Particularly as far as those Jews were concerned who were gathered there in preparation of their emigration. There certainly didn't exist any reason why they should have been treated more severely than the other prisoners.

Q Where were the people arrested taken from the camp at Breendonk?

A Those people who had to come before the military court were taken there. The other people who were there only in Security custody were kept there until the military government informed is that the Security custody was terminated.

Q What was the capacity of that camp?

A I guess that there were never more and probably less than 500 people there.

Q Was there compulsory labor for the prisoners at that camp?

A For those people who were fit to work, labor in the camp was compulsory.

H0967 - 0029

For those who were not fit or only partially fit, such consideration was granted.

Q Do you know whether the chief of the Sipo was informed of cases of mistreatment and whether he took any steps against their recurrence?

A I recall that in the early period of the existence of the camp - I think in the winter of 1941 - complaints reached the chief of the military government, and he appointed a commission to investigate the conditions there.

Q Was that camp at any time ordered to initiate mass campaigns of mistreatment? Were such orders at any time issued by the head office of the Security Police?

A It is true that the head office of the Security Police knew of the existence of that camp, but I cannot imagine that at any time it took any measures to interfere with the conduct of the camp or its administration. I never heard of it and I can't imagine that it happened.

Q Were any executions performed within the territory of the camp?

A Yes.

Q Who ordered and who carried out those executions?

A Sentences of military courts were carried out by military units upon orders of the military chief. I must add that there was a special military unit there to carry out executions and I know that the executions that they performed were not ordered by the military courts, but were ordered by the Fuehrer or OKW or any other authority I don't know.

Q Did the Security Police have any part in those executions?

A No.

Q The mentioned document UK 76 claims on page 2 that about 250 prisoners of that camp perished due to lack of food or as a result of mistreatment, 450 are reported to have been shot and 12 hanged. Is that correct?

A I do not know how many executions were carried oyt there, and I don't know of any cases that people died as a result of mistreatment. I do know that certain diseases broke out there and that certain people died of those diseases and I must add that as a resultof the outbreak of such diseases, the military commando appointed a military physician to be in charge of the camp?

H0967-0030

Q Were any collective fines imposed upon the prisoners of the camp?

A The only man who could have issued such orders would have been the director of the camps. Whether he had the authority to impose such collective fines as result of camp regulations issued by the military authorities, I don't know anything about it.

Q Page 6 of Document UK 76, claims that there existed an order compelling the prisoners to crawl below the bed and it is claimed that Lt. Braus stepped and trampled on the prisoners during the procedure?

A I know nothing about those claims. I never heard of them.

BY LT. COMDR. HARRIS: I suggest that the witness has disqualified himself to testify concerning atrocities which may or may not have occurred within the camp. He says he doesn't know anything about it, and I don't think we are accomplishing anything by asking the questions.

DR. MERKEL: I would like to state that this question was the first to which the witness was not able to answer. He is well acquainted with the conditions which existed in Breendonk, because he had been there. I, therefore, consider him qualified to answer those questions on which he knows and which he can answer.

COMMISSIONER: All right - proceed.

Q Is it true that hoodswere drawn over the heads of prisoners when they left their cells?

A Again I can't say yes or no. I can only venture a guess as to an answer.

MR. MONNERAY: I think this time really it is only a question of a possibility of his knowing. I think you should go on and not stay on this point.

Q At least I would like to ask the witness then - do you know that certain members of certain resistance movements actually had drawn such hoods over their faces and for the reasons that other prisoners should not be able to recognize them?

A There was some talk to that effect, and I had mentioned before that there existed a special unit of a special court there at Breendonk which had their own prisoners there. Due to the particularly secret character of that crime,

H0967-0031

it was considered necessary to conceal the identity of those prisoners so that no other person in the camp could recognize them, so it is quite possible that those prisoners were made to wear such special hoods whenever they left cells of crossed passage ways in the camp. I haven't seen it because during the period of time I didn't come to that camp.

Q The document UK 76 claims on page 15 that Breendonk had been worse than concentration camps in Germany?

A I didn't see any German concentration camps, but due to the strict control and supervision executed by the military commander I can imagine that conditions at the camp were worse than those regulated by the camp directive, and if there are single cases in which those regulations were observed than the camp director would have to take the blame for such conditions.

Q The same document on page 8 claims that it repeatedly occurred that prisoners were thrown into a ditch surrounding the camp and that many of them drowned there. Do you know of such incidents?

A I haven't heard of such incidents, but I believe if that occurred that would have reached the military commander.

H0967-0032

MR. MONNERAY: I think it has been shown it is sufficient that the witness here only from time to time and not very often went in this camp, so I think it is not necessary any more to put questions to him about permanent conditions inside this camp.

COMMISSIONER: The Commission rules that in future cases the witness should simply state whether he has knowledge or not of certain conditions, but it should not be expected that he should actually be informed about existing conditions, then he may explain the relevancy, but in no case should he be permitted to pass personal judgments.

H0967-0033

Q Document UK 76, page 12, states that all prisoners, with very few exceptions, who were interrogated in Breendonk were mistreated and beaten. Is that correct?

A I know nothing about it, nor have there been any complaints.

Q The same page mentions a torture chamber in Breendonk. Was there such a thing?

A I only know of two interrogation rooms, which were furnished, exactly like any other civil service offices, with a desk and a couple of chairs.

Q Page 12 of the same document states that interrogations were undertaken usually by Gestapo officials from Brussels and Antwerp. If they had no authority to torture someone, they telegraphed the Gestapo office in Brussels which had the records of the prisoners, in order to ask whether they were permitted to torture. In Brussels, Standartenfuehrer Dr. Canaris usually answered in the affirmative. Later, Obersturmbannfuehrer Ehlers. At the last, it was Canaris again. Will you please elucidate?

A The prisoners who were transferred to Breendonk were transferred by the entire security police from the entire area of the kommando from Belgium and France only if the existing wehrmacht prisons no longer had room. Besides the security police, the secret field police also, and the field gendarmerie, also transferred prisoners there for the same reasons. I also will mention here that special units by the name of "rote kapelle" delivered their prisoners there. The people who were interrogated could not all belong, without any further comment, to the security police in Brussels. But as far as they did belong to the secret police or any other authorities subordinate to them, the chief of the office in Brussels would have been the proper authority to grant third degree methods. The conducting expert had to ask permission in writing for any third degree interrogations, basing his request on certain reasons for it. There is no question of any torture, but the only way permission could have been asked for would have

H0967-0034

been by letter. Any other means of communication is not known to me. If this permission had been requested by telephone, this telephone would have been a public telephone--which, of course, would have been Belgian property. I cannot assume that any permission such as a third degree interrogation could have been asked for in the way stated.

Q Were there Belgian or French SIPO or SD prisons? Did the SD or SIPO have authority to institute proceedings again foreign nationals in Belgium or in Northern France, or to execute them by shooting?

A No. I have mentioned that all people arrested by SIPO or secret police or field gendarmerie had to be transferred to military posts.

Q Did the security police order the shooting of hostages in Belgium or in Northern France? Were there concentration camps in Belgium or in Northern France?

A There were no concentration camps in Belgium or in Northern France on the model of German concentration camps, which executed protective custody.

Q Who was commandant for the evacuation of Jews from Belgium and the North of France?

A In order to answer this question properly, I must discuss the organization of the deputy of the chief of the security police. Department One was in charge of administration and personnel; Department Two, enemies of the ideology; Department Three, living areas; Department Four, Gestapo; Department Five, criminal police; Department Six, foreign intelligence service. Section One employed administrative officials; Section Two employed SA fuehrers and perhaps some criminal police; Section Three, again SA fuehrers; Section Four, Gestapo officials and employees; Section Five, again detectives (criminal police); Section Six, SD employees. Collection and deportation of individuals was taken

H0967-0035

care of by Department No.2. In May 1943, Section Two was dissolved, and matters pertaining to Jews, Freemasons and churches were transferred to Section Four -- which was the Gestapo.

Q When was Section Eichmann put in charge of these matters?

A Section Eichmann was in charge of this in an executive capacity at the Reichssichereitshauptamt.

Q What were the functions of the Jewish Committee in Brussels?

A The Jewish Committee in Brussels was active in the care of Jews. This Jewish council took an active part in taking care of personal matters of these people and also taking care of the clothing and food supplies during their transportation.

Q Who supervised their shelter, treatment and food supply?

A I am convinced that this came under the military administration. Internal administration and supervision was executed by Section Two, which I mentioned before. On approximately the first of May, 1943, these functions were transferred to Section Four.

Q Who actually transferred the Jews to Mecheln?

A Section Two, which I have just mentioned.

Q What was the purpose of the evacuation of these Jews?

A Toward the end of the year 1940 or the beginning of 1941, Jews were asked to report at a certain place. The only thing known in the subsequent time was that these people were to be used to labor in the reconstruction of the East. We believed that our conviction was confirmed by letters which we had received from the military authorities or the Jewish council. These letters came from the East and also from Theresienstadt, and they asked the addressees to take care of belongings which they had stored.

Q In connection with the Jewish problem, did anyone in your circle discuss the final solution of it, and what was understood by it?

A Regarding the solution of the Jewish problem in general, or regarding the Jewish problem in Belgium?

Q The problem in general.

A I have never heard anything about the final solution in general.

Q Did the Security Police in Belgium confiscate the fortunes of the Jews?

H0967-0036

A I can answer this question only beginning with the period starting 1 May 1943. I do know that then the Jews' fortunes were not confiscated by the security police. The confiscation of the Jewish fortunes -- or, as they were called, "enemy fortunes" -- was with Group Twelve of the military administration.

Q Do you know anything about how the transports were equipped and who furnished the accompanying personnel?

A I never saw such a transport personally, but the lager fuehrer informed me that, at least after May 1, 1943, these transports were equipped very well. He told me that the Jewish Committee, particularly, played a big role in this. Food, blankets, water and medical supplies were furnished for a longer period than was required for the actual travel time. Up to May, 1943, it was done by Section Two. After May, 1943, a group composed of volksdeutsch who originated in the Banat and Rumania took this transport from Mecheln to the frontier. However, it was not always thus. That only happened occasional Usually these transports were taken over by the ordnungspolizei and were accompanied from Mecheln to their final destination.

Q It is correct that, contrary to the orders issued by Eichmann, the Jewish Committee was authorized to open homes for children and sick people?

A Yes.

Q Is it correct that, contrary to the orders of Himmler, six to eight hundred Jews were left in Mecheln when the troops decamped?

A The lagerfuehrer telephoned me, since he could not get hold of another official, to ask me for the preparation of railroad cars for the transportation of the people as ordered by Himmler in his area of authority. I advised him, since I did not have any authority to issue orders, to leave these Jews in the camp. I asked him to turn them over, including their property and their available rations, the Jewish indigent personnel. He himself was to withdraw when the kommando commandant of Mecheln himself withdrew. I had no opportunity to check on this in person, but later on I met some of our people in Hasselt and asked them whether the lagerfuehrer acted according to my advice. That was confirmed.

Q Is it correct that the German police generally were designated as Gestapo or SD within the area of authority without the public's being informed

H0967 - 0037

about the details or the tasks of every individual factor of the organization?

A In Belgium, as everywhere else, the Gestapo was held responsible for everything that happened. Neither the public nor the authorities had any concept of the detailed tasks which had been assigned to each one. In addition to that, some gangs used this designation in order to be able to commit arrests, mistreatments, or any other punishable actions.

Q What do you know about the activity of the SS or the police courts?

A It is very well known everywhere that sentences were executed more severely in the SS and police courts than in the general courts.

Q Were Gestapo employees guilty of some punishable offense also sentenced in these courts?

A Yes. It was generally known that sentences against members of the security police or the SD were very severe. Himmler had ordered the printing of the procedure before these courts in pamphlet form. These pamphlets were distributed to all offices, where they were read during the training and educational courses of the civil service employees in order to be effective.

H0967-0038

as a medium of teaching and also as a horrible example. Also, it was known -- and the civil service employees were informed of it -- that in occupied territory they had to keep their hands clean in every direction, because, after a possibly victorious war, the police would still have to take care of cases which up to the date of victory might not have been cleared up.

Q Previously you mentioned "verscharfte vernehmung". Were such "verscharfte vernehmung" being practiced within your area of authority?

A Such "third degree" interrogations took place. As I previously stated, they had to be authorized by the chief, who either authorized them or rejected them.

Q How many such "third degrees" took place between 1940 and 1944?

A We must again refer to the organization. The chief of the office in Brussels authorized those applications which were submitted by the office in Brussels. Whether the chiefs of the outlying offices or, later, their successors, the kommandos of the security police, were in a position to authorize such action, I do not know.

Q Will you answer my question. How large was the number of such interrogations in Brussels?

A It is my opinion that there were no more than fifty during the entire time in Belgium. One must consider that not every third degree, though authorized, may have taken place actually. I wish to repeat that a transgressi of the directive was not permitted.

Q What, exactly, were these "third degree" interrogations?

A The only thing I can remember from the directive was the withdrawal of one meal, manacles, and -- at the worse -- beating with a stick. A definite number of strokes with a stick without an attending physician; if the number of strokes exceeded ten, the attendance of a physician was prescribed. Then, too, a limit was set. I cannot recall it; fifteen or twenty-five strokes.

Q Were there any instruments of torture kept in the office of the chief of the security police in Brussels or any of the outlying offices, or anywhere within the sphere of your authority?

A Officially, there were no torture instruments. They were prohibited, and, consequently, they could not have been acquired.

H0967-0039

Q Were the torture cellars, which are repeatedly cited by the Prosecution, in existence?

A The security police had no torture cellars. The offices of the security police had arrest cells where the prisoners were to be kept during the period before they were sent to military prisons. There was a strict order which required that prisoners, because of the meals, were not to be picked up in the morning before eight o'clock and were to be brought back before eleven o'clock, were not to be picked up before two o'clock, and had to be returned by six o'clock. In Brussels it was as follows: If one wished to interrogate a prisoner outside office hours, one had to make an application to the commander of the jail.

Q Would it have been possible to hide the tortures which are said to have occurred daily?

A The security police had their offices in what were originally apartment buildings, and they were not constructed to hide anything without its becoming known. The general public, for reasons of its own, perhaps for intervention or to have a question answered, posted themselves in the hallways of these buildings.

Q When Belgian nationals were arrested, did persons connected with Belgian society try to intervene for such people?

A It was customary in Luxembourg, and I do not believe it different in France, that the public, for the slightest reason, turned to the military commander or to the military government or to the different sectors of the police. People intervened either by telephone, in person, or by letter -- by telephone or in person frequently even before the person who had been arrested had arrived at the headquarters of the organization which had made the arrest. Every arrest, by order of the military commander of the military government, had to be made in sevenfold copies, of which five copies went to each police sector. Among these five sectors, the Belgian police was included.

Q The German document, page 3304, Document F 560, RF 305: "One must conclude from checking these testimonies that the barbarism which was applied during these interrogations were always the same in the several localities mentioned." Will you please elucidate?

H0967-0040

A Nothing except "vershcarfte vernehmung"was permitted within the framework of police activity, referring to the directive mentioned. In my opinion, such mistreatment and torture of the arrestees can never have taken place.

Q The same page declares the following: "A man who made an attempt to escape and was captured was put back into his cell, turned over to police dogs, and eaten alive."

A I have heard nothing regarding this case, and no doubt that would have been made public. Aside from that fact, I do not know of a single case where police dogs were used. There weren't any.

Q On page 3306 of the German record, a Gestapo headquarters in Armentieres is mentioned. Was there a Gestapo office in Armentieres?

A I only recall that there wasone office in Northern France, and that was in Lille.

Q Page 3308 mentions a torture cellar in Valenciennes. Was there such a torture chamber?

A According to my knowledge, Valenciennes also, being in Northern France, had no security police office.

H0967 - 0041

Q I am submitting to you the document F 560 RF 305. I should like to read a few excerpts from that document : Page 15 of this document mentions a man by the name of Stanis as a member of the Gestapo. Is that correct ?

A Neither the Gestapo nor the security police had a member by the name of Stanis.

Q Page 16 mentions a Gestapo office in Arras, and also mentions a certain man by the name of Habener in Loos.

A As far as I know, Loos was a military prison near Lille. There was a man who belonged to the office of Lille by the name of Habener.

Q Page 19 mentions mistreatment by the security police in Lille. The page mentions the feldpolizei.

A The feldpolizei had nothing to do with the security police. I have nothing to say in regard to that. As far as I can remember, the security police and the commander of the security police was extant in that part of Lille called La Madeleine. If the statement of the interrogee is correct, the official has committed an infraction of the rules. Hitting him or stepping on him were not permitted to the interrogator in accordance with the directive, even when it was a "verscharfte vernehmung".

Q I am submitting to you F 571, RF 307. Page 21 of this document mentions offices of the Gestapo in Courdray and Tourquois. Were there any office of the security police here ?

A There was no office of the security police in Tourquois. There was none in Courdray either.

Q Page 27 mentions an office of the Gestapo in Boulogne-sur-Mer.

A There was none there. I stated before, as far as I know there was only an office in Lille.

Q Page 30 speaks of police in civilian clothing. Is this a sign that it was security police ?

A That is no proof at all, because the secret field police, as well as the counter-intelligence and specially-charged troops, also appeared in civilian clothes as well as uniform. Also, illegal troops calling themselves Gestapo appeared both in uniform and in civilian clothes. The military commander in Belgium and Northern France, by means of the press, repeatedly pointed out such counterfeit police; he published the identification cards of all the police sections including the identification cards of the Belgian

H0967-0042

police. He asked the population to immediately call up any military office if anyone should come to them claiming to be police and having no identification card.

Q Referring to Chapter Two of the document designated as UK 76, RS 329, Page 80 reads as follows : "We can actually say that no one arrested by the Gestapo has escaped mistreatment".

A I was in Belgium for four years. No one ever made any statement at any time that anywhere did he suffer such treatment at the hands of the police Whenever any disagreement arose, the military commander, as well as the chief of the pertinent office of the security police, stepped in. I, myself, took steps because it was not in the mental makeup of the professional policeman to act in such a manner. If it is stated here that practically no one, or no one at all, escaped beatings, there are as many witnesses as there are adults in Belgium.

Q The last question referring to the subject : Were there any "verscharftevernehmung" practiced against women ?

A No, such interrogations were never permitted in the case of women. As far as I can remember, the directive verbatim, it does not mention specifically that subject; but it was considered generally a law in the security police that women were not to undergo third degree interrogations, and that they were not to use manacles on them.

(The Commission adjourned at 1700 hours.)

The foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of FRANZ STRAUB, taken on 20 June 1946.

Dernice Winkler
Reporter

Dj. Noll
Reporter

CERTIFIED TO :

M. Martin Havard
Commissioner